

INFO	LOG-00	EEB-00	AID-00	AMAD-00	ACQ-00	COME-00	INL-00
	DOEE-00	DOTE-00	PERC-00	PDI-00	DS-00	EAP-00	EUR-00
	OIGO-00	FAAE-00	VCI-00	FRB-00	H-00	TEDE-00	INR-00
	INSE-00	L-00	MOFM-00	MOF-00	M-00	VCIE-00	NRC-00
	NRRC-00	NSAE-00	ISN-00	OES-00	OIG-00	NIMA-00	PM-00
	GIWI-00	P-00	ISNE-00	FMPC-00	SP-00	SSO-00	SS-00
	STR-00	T-00	CBP-00	BBG-00	IIP-00	SCRS-00	PMB-00
	DSCC-00	PRM-00	DRL-00	G-00	SCA-00	CARC-00	SAS-00
	FA-00	SWCI-00	PESU-00	SANA-00	/000W		

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 FM AMEMBASSY ASMARA  
 TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 0706  
 INFO IGAD COLLECTIVE  
 AMEMBASSY MOSCOW  
 AMEMBASSY SOFIA  
 CIA WASHDC  
 DIA WASHDC  
 NSC WASHDC  
 SECDEF WASHDC  
 CDR USCENTCOM MACDILL AFB FL  
 JICCENT MACDILL AFB FL  
 CJTF-HOA J2X CAMP LEMONIER DJ  
 HQ USAFRICOM STUTTGART GE  
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C O N F I D E N T I A L ASMARA 000035

E.O. 12958: DECL: 02/11/2019  
 TAGS: [PREL](#) [PARM](#) [MOPS](#) [ER](#) [RU](#)  
 SUBJECT: ERITREA'S AIR FORCE, SANCTIONS, AND RUSSIA

Classified By: Ambassador Ronald K. McMullen for reason 1.4(d)

1. (C) ERITREA'S RUSSIAN MIGS  
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The Eritrean Air Force flies a number of MiG-29 fighters purchased from Russia. To maintain these front-line aircraft, the Isaias regime entered into a technical services contract with a Russian parastatal corporation. At least three Russian and a number of Belarusian aviation technicians lived in Asmara and serviced the MiGs. On December 23rd, the Security Council adopted UNSCR 1907, imposing an arms embargo and other sanctions on Eritrea. The resolution mandated, inter alia, that all UN member states shall "prevent the sale or supply to Eritrea by their nationals or from their territories... of technical assistance, training, financial and other assistance, related to the military activities or to the provision, manufacture, maintenance or use of these items..."

2. (C) RUSSIAN AVIATION TECHNICIANS "HAVE LEFT"  
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Russian Ambassador Igor Chubarov (protect) said he met with the Russian aviation technicians and contacted "Mikoyan Corporation" (presumably the Mikoyan division of Russia's United Aircraft Corporation) in mid-January to discuss UNSCR 1907. "Not wanting to be in violation of the UN sanctions, the technicians left." Chubarov told the ambassador February 12 that "since January, I haven't seen any Russian or other Slavic aircraft technicians in Asmara." Eritrea's army has several hundred modern Russian-designed heavy battle tanks. Chubarov intimated that there might have been some technical assistance provided by "Slavs" to the Eritrean army to maintain the tanks, but he was uncertain whether it continued or not.

3. (C) BUT WHAT ABOUT THOSE SUKOIS?  
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Before mid-January the Eritrean Air Force typically parked one Su-27 (reportedly of Ukrainian provenance) and two or three MiG-29s on the tarmac of the military wing of Asmara International Airport. Since early February embosffs have twice seen two Su-27s and no MiG-29s at the Asmara airport.

Emboffs' ability to visually survey the military wing of the Asmara airport is limited and irregular, but the MiGs' absence may indicate that they've been garaged due to limited maintenance. Post wonders who, if anyone, might be maintaining the Su-27s? Observers in Asmara speculate that the potential grounding of Eritrea's top air superiority fighters would at least temporarily crimp the Isaias regime's ability to wage a conventional war against Ethiopia or another foe.

McMullen